**Of Mice and Men: Alaina Plummer**

Steinbeck expresses loneliness, kindness and cruelty throughout *Of Mice and Men* through his characters actions.Crooks is the loneliest character in the book. The other ranch hands are mean to him because he is black. He is represented as weak because of his disability and also alone. Steinbeck he uses the best friends, George and Lennie to show kindness and cruelty. George feels like it is his responsibility to take care of the childish Lennie, because he knows Lennie would never make it on his own. He snaps at him all the time because he doesn’t want anything to happen to him. Also when Candy lets someone else kill his dog, he is being both kind and cruel. He sacrifices his own happiness, so his dog can be put out of his suffering. Candy began to regret making himself lonely, “I outta shot that dog myself.” (p. 61) This foreshadows George’s big decision in the end of *Mice and Men.* Steinbeck leaves you asking, are cruel actions sometimes kind in the long run?

George and Lennie are the two main characters and the main symbols of all three themes in this book. They travel together so they won’t be like the average rancher; alone. The two friends work hard because they have a dream together to one day have their very own farm. Even on the farm they will stay together, because they love each other. George doesn’t have to take care of Lennie and sometimes wishes he wouldn’t, “God you are a lot of trouble. I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn’t have you…I could maybe even have a girl.”(p.7) After George yells at Lennie he always says something nice because he sees Lennie’s hurt look on his face. Since he corrects Lennie all the time, Lennie learns to watch and follow George’s actions. Lennie knows he bugs George, so he volunteers himself to be alone so George can be happy, “If you don’ want me I can go off in the hills an’ find a cave. I can go away anytime.”(p.12) George always replies with the same answer, No Lennie, what would you do with yourself? He says this because he honestly does care for Lennie but he also fears of being alone. George and Lennie are the perfect example of being cruel out of kindness.

Candy and Crooks also bring in these three themes into *Of Mice and Men.* Crooks lives in the barn all by his crippled, lone self because he is black. He is bitter to the other ranch hands even when they are being kind because they keep him so isolated. When Lennie comes to talk to Crooks, he breaks down his “I don’t need anyone” attitude, “A guy goes nuts if he ain’t got nobody… ill tell ya a guy gets too lonely and he gets sick.” Candy on the other hand does have someone, more of a something, his smelly old dog. The dog gets on all of the rancher’s nerves because it smells so bad, so they suggest Candy shoots it. When Candy lets someone else shoot his dog he knows it is the best thing for his dog, but doesn’t want it for himself. These men really drill home Steinbeck’s idea of loneliness.

Kindness, cruelty, and loneliness are represented in several different ways throughout *Of Mice and Men.* When Lennie pets the mouse and dog and accidently kills them, it shows his kindness turning into cruelty, his love to death actions. It also foreshadows Lennie’s big accident with Curley’s lonely wife at the end of this book. Candy choosing to shoot his dog because he doesn’t want it to suffer also foreshadows George killing his best friend Lennie so he won’t have to suffer when Curly and his men get a hold of him. Crooks stating that a lonely man goes crazy helps imply that’s what happens to George after the story ends. In the end, George’s cruel action out of kindness is nice to Lennie, but harmful for himself.

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| **Lakeview Academy English Department Essay Rubric** | | | |
|  | **1-2 Below Expectations**  **-A 1 paper** is a written response that is no more than a reference to the task.  **-A 2 paper** is unacceptably brief or incoherently long, full of mechanical errors, and/or missed the focus of the topic. | **3-4 Meets Expectations**  **-A 3 paper** may have the basic structure of the essay, but includes major flaws or weaknesses in one or more areas.  **-A 4 paper** has a recognizable thesis, structure, and development, but lacks the polish of a 5-6 paper, and has weakness in one or more areas. | **5-6 Exceeds Expectations**  **-A 5 paper** answers the prompt very well, but may lack the polish of a 6, or have an area of weakness.  **-A 6 paper** is above the pack, answering the prompt with excellence in all six areas. |
| **Organization (Major Emphasis)** | Ideas or details are loosely related; the paper lacks a real thesis. | The essay structure allows the reader to read the text without undue confusion, and includes a thesis. | The presentation and structure of the writing are compelling; the thesis is strong. |
| **Content**  **(Major Emphasis)** | Sketchy information, an unclear topic, and limited or unrelated details with weak commentary weaken the essay. | The writing has clear topic, but is weakened by generalities and/ or poor support, and less insightful commentary. | The text is clear, well-supported and enhanced by apt, concrete detail and insightful commentary. |
| **Voice** | The text lacks life or energy. | The writing communicates with the reader. | The energy and passion of the writing engage the reader. |
| **Word**  **Choice** | Limited, vague, redundant vocabulary, and poor diction harm expression. | The language communicates effectively. | Precise, vivid, and natural language paint a clear picture. |
| **Sentence**  **Fluency** | Reading the text aloud is difficult since fused sentences, fragments, and awkward sentence construction impair meaning. | The text uses complete sentences. | The complete sentences are a delight to read aloud. |
| **Conven-**  **tions** | Grammatical errors and lapses in writing conventions distract the reader. | Grammatical errors and lapses in writing conventions distract the reader, but do not impair meaning. | Grammatical errors and lapses in writing conventions are negligible. |

Self response:

1. Conclusion could be stronger
2. No ne of these words
3. I fixed it.
4. Good examples
5. Not too repetitive except for kindness, loneness and cruelty
6. **Intro** Words: 173 Sentences: 12
7. **Body Paragraph 1** Words: 220 Sentences: 11
8. **Body paragraph 2**  Words: 155 Sentences: 11
9. **Conclusion**  Words: 127 Sentences: 6
10. Thesis: Steinbeck leaves you asking, are cruel actions sometimes kind in the long run?

Did I prove it? : Yes, but not very well. Some of my examples were pretty broad & my concrete details weren’t all that great. My conclusion defiantly needs some work but it serves its purpose.